

Testimony of the
Connecticut Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery Society
Connecticut ENT Society
Connecticut Urology Society
Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians

In SUPPORT of
SB 872 AAC THE USE OF INDOOR TANNING DEVICES BY PERSONS UNDER EIGHTEEN YEARS OF AGE

To the Public Health Committee

On March 15, 2013

Good afternoon Senator Gerrantana, Representative Johnson, and other distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Dr. Philip Kerr, and I practice in Farmington at the UConn Health Center, where I am an Associate Professor of Dermatology and Dermatopathology and am the Director of the Melanoma Clinic. As the immediate Past President of the CT Dermatology Society, I am here representing more than 1000 Connecticut physicians in the above-named societies who strongly support SB 872.

There is little scientific doubt that a relationship exists between the artificial ultraviolet radiation that is emitted by commercial tanning devices and the development of skin cancers. Recently, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a division of the World Health Organization, classified tanning devices as "Group 1: carcinogenic to humans." Other noteworthy members of that group include asbestos and tobacco smoke. Their analysis showed a direct link between the use of tanning devices and an increased risk of developing malignant melanoma. Malignant melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer and the sixth most common cause of cancer deaths in the United States.

Unfortunately, malignant melanoma has been diagnosed more and more frequently in the past few decades, especially in young adults. Twenty-five years ago, melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer were rarely diagnosed in patients under the age of 30. Yet today, melanoma is now the most common

cancer in 25-29 year olds, the second most common in 15-34 year olds, and a leading cause of cancer death in these young people.





Why do we agree with this bill's focus on young people (minors)? It has long been known that the earlier in one's life that a person gets exposed to significant amounts of ultraviolet radiation, the more likely they are to develop skin cancer, including melanoma, over their lifetime. Additionally, we believe that young people are less able to weigh the pros and cons of using commercial tanning beds. This relative lack in ability to weigh pros and cons is, of course, why minors are generally not able to enter into legal contracts or make their own medical decisions. Indeed, we as physicians would not be able to treat a minor with ultraviolet light therapy for medical purposes without getting parental consent.

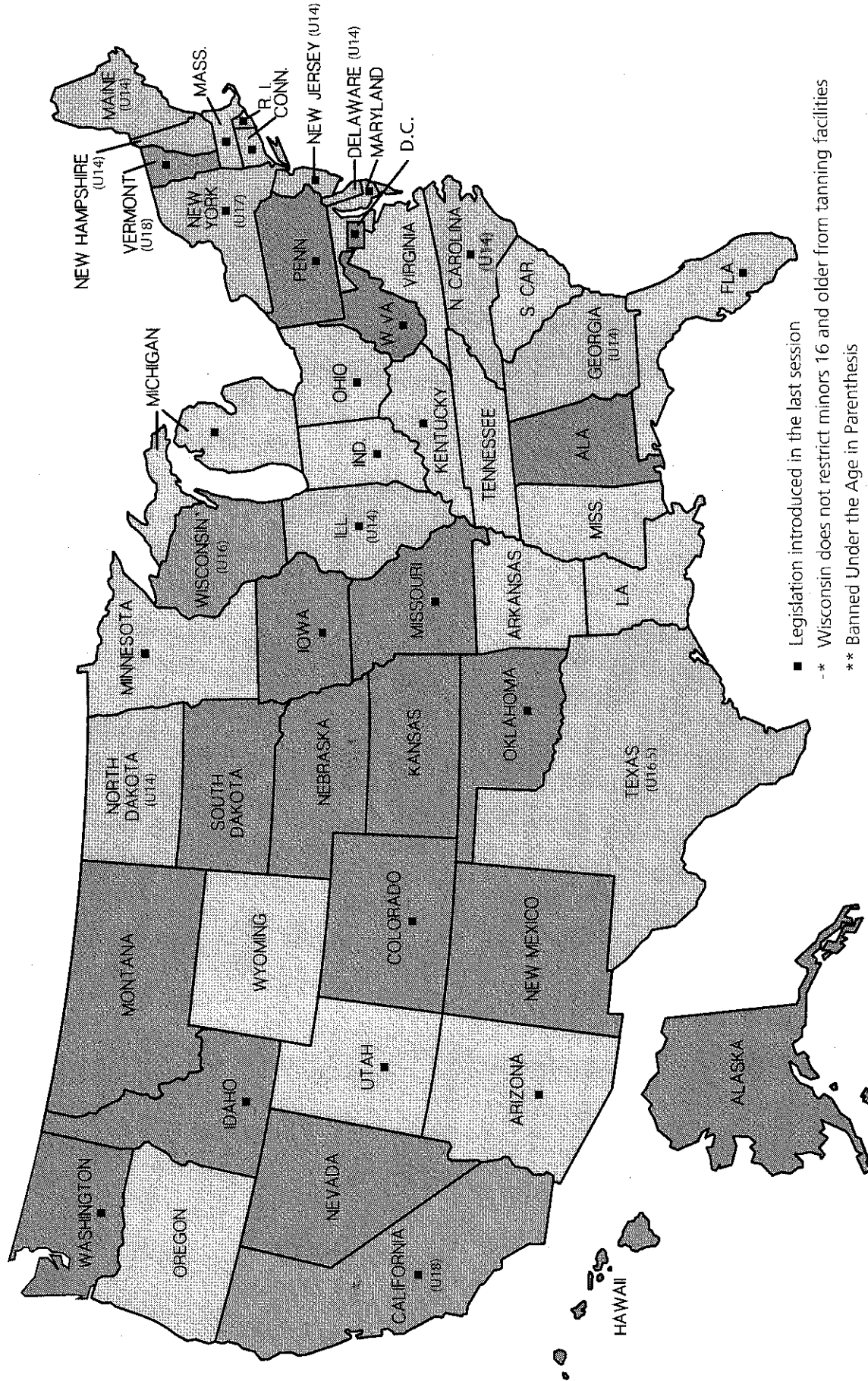
Importantly, minors have been shown to be more susceptible to misinformation about indoor tanning. Such misinformation includes, but unfortunately is not limited to, the idea that a person can achieve a "safe tan" using tanning beds. Tanning is simply a genetic defense mechanism, triggered by DNA injury from ultraviolet radiation, in which skin cells try to shield themselves from *further* injury. There is no such thing as a "safe" or "responsible" tan any more than there is a safe or responsible number of cigarettes a person can smoke. Another bit of misinformation the tanning bed industry promulgates is the idea that tanning bed use will help people make vitamin D. The truth is that ultraviolet **B** triggers vitamin D production in the skin, and, while plentiful in natural sunlight, UV B accounts for only a tiny fraction of the UV radiation one receives from a tanning bed. Over 90% of the UV light emitted from tanning beds is UV A, which does nothing to help create vitamin D.

In closing, we feel that the ever-growing body of evidence linking the use of indoor tanning facilities and the deadliest form of skin cancer requires us to take a firmer stance on how these services are used by minors in the State of Connecticut. In doing so, we hope and anticipate that lives will be saved. Thank you.

If members of this committee have any further questions, I can be reached at 860-679-4600, or you may contact Debbie Osborn, Executive Director of the Connecticut Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery Society, at 860-567-4911.

Indoor Tanning Restrictions by State

-  No Tanning Restrictions
-  Only Requires Parental Consent
-  Underage Tanning Banned*
-  Underage Ban & Parental Permission Required**



■ Legislation introduced in the last session

- * Wisconsin does not restrict minors 16 and older from tanning facilities

** Banned Under the Age in Parenthesis